

EDUCATION & THE SEA



Netwerk Oorlog en Vrede – Province of West Flanders

If you think the sea and coast only need to be discussed as a footnote in class, think again! We therefore gladly help interested teachers with all sorts of assignments, experiments and useful information.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN THE CLASSROOM

The Flemish coastal municipalities are organising a lot of activities concerning the First World War between 2014 and 2018. Various organisations and authorities provide customised educational packages in this period. One of these is briefly explained below. Other useful websites with regard to education and WWI include:
www.wegwijzerWOI.be
www.nooitmeeroorlog.be
www.1418herdacht.be

'REMEMBRANCE CLASSES' ABOUT WWI ON THE BELGIAN COAST

One of the initiators is youth hostel De Ploate from Ostend. Remembrance classes are organised in collaboration with the Provincial Domain of Raversyde and the Ostend Marine Ecological Centre. This is a varied two-day programme which focuses on the First World War on the Belgian coast. If required, the programme can be extended to three days so that the children have a bit more free time.

On the first day the pupils are introduced

to the topic. This is followed by the 'HMS Vindictive walk'. Then the ferry takes the group to the east bank of Ostend harbour. Starting at the HMS Vindictive memorial, they go for a historical walk with a guide. During this walk, the story is told of how the First World War became a reality for Ostend on 25 August 1914, when the first German soldiers were seen in the surrounding area. When the first wounded soldiers arrived in Ostend from the front, this resulted in a stream of refugees. Many inhabitants of Ostend as well as other Belgians made use of the fishing fleet to flee to the United Kingdom. The Germans captured Ostend and Zeebrugge and used these two coastal towns as a base of operations for their U-boats. Subsequently, the British did all they could to blockade these Belgian ports. And this is where the story of HMS Vindictive comes in (see also Strubbe in this issue). After a walk in the evening, the youth hostel becomes the setting for a special 'WWI meal' offered to the pupils and served in mess tins.

On the second day, the pupils visit the Domain of Raversyde, where attention is paid to the Aachen battery from WWI, the Saltzwedel Neu battery from WWII, the Prince Charles Memorial and 'ANNO 1465' (the story of the excavated and partly reconstructed medieval village of Walraversijde). For more information on these remembrance classes please go to www.schoolklassen.be, www.jeugdherbergen.be or www.raversyde.be.



From the summer of 2014 onwards, Raversyde will provide school groups with additional options that can be integrated in overnight school trips.

'WWI TOUCHSTONE' DEVELOPED BY THE PROVINCE OF WEST FLANDERS

To ensure the quality of similar packages regarding peace and remembrance education, the Province of West Flanders has developed a 'WWI Touchstone'. This educational inspiration guide concerning WWI has been developed to support enthusiasts in the creation of a project. It is a tool and/or guideline for completing the project successfully. After all, the story of the war should be a story with a clear message of peace. This is only possible if we start from responsible remembrance. The touchstone can be used to prepare a new project or as an instrument for reflection and self-evaluation. Anyone who elaborates a project relating to the First World War can use this (school teams, individual teachers, university teachers involved in teacher training, museums, local authorities, holiday accommodations...). The touchstone's structure is based on three important aspects of remembrance education: knowledge and insight; empathy and solidarity; and reflection and action. Attention is also paid to possible pitfalls, ideas and opportunities. In addition, the reader will also find specific educational projects for primary and secondary education. This is just a selection, but the aim is to update the touchstone on a regular basis. The complete 1914-18 touchstone can be found under the section 'Oorlog en Vrede' on the webpage 'Vredeseducatie' of the Culture Department of the Province of West Flanders (www.west-vlaanderen.be).

Mathieu de Meyer, *with thanks to Carl Craey*



A class visiting Raversijde (Province of West Flanders – Raversijde)